

**CITY OF ALBEMARLE
PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPARTMENT / ELECTRIC DIVISION**

TREE TRIMMING AND TREE CUTTING POLICY

1. This policy covers the normal and emergency tree trimming and cutting operations of the City's Electric Department and requests for tree trimming and cutting by customers of the City's utilities services.
2. The purpose of the policy is to provide understanding of the City's needs for tree trimming and cutting along with the mechanisms for accomplishing those needs.
3. **POLICY**

1. **OVERHEAD PRIMARY LINES (14.4kv, 2400v)**

The City will maintain right-of-way for its primary lines, including the trimming/cutting/bush hogging of trees to prevent line and equipment failure. This tree trimming/cutting/bush hogging is done on an as-needed basis; however, it is routinely scheduled by the Electric Department. The trimming/cutting/bush hogging typically will be performed by a tree service contracted by the City. The tree service will provide employees that are trained by a certified Arborist. Customer reports or requests for tree trimming and/or cutting and/or bush hogging in the vicinity of primary lines are investigated and acted upon if approved by the Supervisor and the Department Superintendent and the conditions of Section 3.4 are met.

2. **OVERHEAD SECONDARY LINES (120/480 VOLTS)**

Overhead secondary lines are designed and constructed to withstand tree limbs moving in proximity of the lines. Therefore, routine tree trimming/cutting is not performed in areas where individual secondary lines run to individual residences, businesses, etc. unless one of the following exceptions apply:

EXCEPTION 1 If a secondary tap arrangement exists where more than one structure is fed off of a tap pole, the secondary line running from the primary to the tap pole may have tree trimming/cutting done in its vicinity. This trimming/cutting will only be done if deemed necessary for reliable system operation and only if approved by the Supervisor and the Electric Department Superintendent.

EXCEPTION 2 If tree limbs are in direct contact with a secondary line, and the customer requests the City to trim the limbs off the line, this work will be done with the approval of the Supervisor and Electric Department Superintendent.

3. **SECURITY LIGHTS**

The City does not trim/cut trees or limbs that obstruct security lights. It is the responsibility of the customer to remove limbs that obstruct the light from security lights. The City will remove limbs that are in contact with the security light or the secondary wire.

4. **DISTANCE REQUIREMENT FOR TRIMMING/CUTTING/BUSH HOGGING**

The City shall accept responsibility for the trimming and/or cutting and/or bush hogging of trees where the tree trunk is located within 15 feet of the primary utility pole line as shown in Attachment A. Where feasible, this 30 foot right-of-way will first be bush hogged, then any necessary side trimming will be performed. If a customer specifically requests that a tree located within the 30 foot right-of-way be cut, the City may do so with the approval of the Supervisor and Electric Department Superintendent if it is deemed cost efficient. If it is not cost efficient for a tree to be cut, the City still may elect to cut the tree if the customer agrees to pay the cost incurred by the City. However, the removal of the debris will still be the responsibility of the customer. In areas where the tree trunk is located outside of the 30 foot right-of-way, but the limbs or branches are less than 15 feet from the pole line, side trimming will be performed. This trimming may be more or less than 15 feet from the pole line, depending on where the proper cut for the health of the tree needs to be made.

5. **CUSTOMER REQUESTS FOR TREE TRIMMING/CUTTING OF TREES LOCATED AWAY FROM POWER LINES**

The City does not trim or cut trees for aesthetic purposes to reduce shade, falling leaves, etc. Nor does the City trim or cut trees that are fallen or dead unless one of the following exceptions apply:

EXCEPTION 1 If a tree has fallen across a power line, City crews will cut whatever is necessary for the lines to be cleared. However, the debris removal will be the responsibility of the property owner.

EXCEPTION 2 If a tree is dead or dying, or is in the process of falling over, it may be cut if it can be classified as a “danger tree” by the Supervisor or Electric Department Superintendent. Such trees will be cut, however, the debris removal will be the responsibility of the property owner.

If a customer wishes to trim or cut a tree in the vicinity of the City’s electric lines and the trimming or cutting does not fall under policies 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, or 3.4, the customer must contract with a private service to trim or cut the tree. In any event, the City should be contacted by either the customer or the contractor when such work is to be done. This will allow the City the opportunity to properly protect primary lines or to temporarily remove secondary lines while the work is being done. When the City is responsible for trimming/cutting on primary lines, the trimming/cutting will consist only of removing limbs and branches to allow adequate clearance for the electric lines. If a customer wishes further shaping or “rounding” of the trees, this will be the responsibility of, and at the cost of, the customer.

6. **SPECIAL CUSTOMER REQUESTS FOR TREE TRIMMING/CUTTING**

Any special customer request for tree trimming/cutting will be referred to the Director of Public Utilities. An evaluation will be made by the Supervisor or Electric Department Superintendent based on utility system operation and should the request be granted, it must be approved by the Director. This approved work will only be done when City crews are available and can be properly scheduled.

7. **REMOVAL OF TREES, LIMBS, BRANCHES, BRUSH**

When the City is responsible for routine right-of-way trimming or cutting, it will also be responsible for removing limbs, branches, brush and other debris, excluding stump removal. The trees and wood are normally left for the property owner. Should the owner not want the wood, they may request the City to remove it. In rights-of-way that are bush hogged, the trees are limbed and chipped, but the wood will be left for the property owner or will be left to decay.

8. **EMERGENCY TREE TRIMMING/CUTTING**

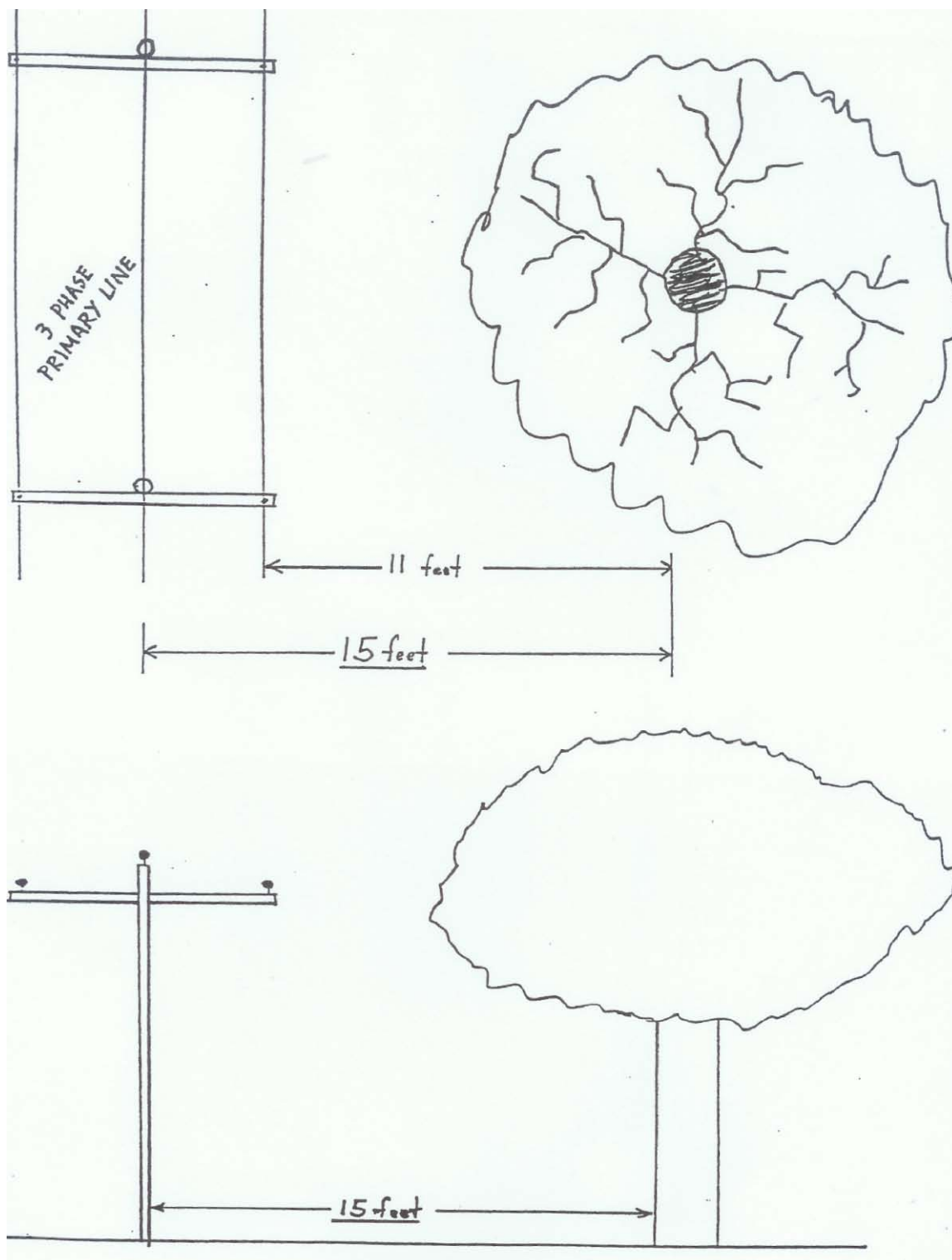
If an emergency situation exists due to weather, where additional City or contract crews are assisting in clean-up, caution must be exercised in the areas of tree trimming and cutting. This includes any trimming and/or cutting of trees in the vicinity of utilities services by crews other than the Electric Department. The Electric Department Superintendent and/or his designated Supervisor will provide any special guidance needed to safely perform the work.

9. **PLANTING TREES AND SHRUBS**

The City does not allow the planting of trees or shrubs directly underneath overhead power lines or directly on top of underground power lines. Trees and shrubs should be planted at least 15 feet from the pole line, allowing the City to maintain a 30 foot right-of-way. Therefore, the City will not be responsible for damage to vegetation resulting from the maintenance or replacement of the lines, or for any other reason.

10. **TREE REPLACEMENT**

When a customer requests that a tree be removed, and it falls under the guidelines of this policy, the City will do so as a service to the customer. However, if the City makes a request to the customer to remove a tree near their home, the City may elect to offer to replace the tree with a Dogwood Tree or a Bradford Pear Tree. The Supervisor or the Electric Department Superintendent will decide approval on a case by case basis. The customer will be allowed to pick which type of tree, the color of the Dogwood and the location the tree is to be planted, as long as it falls under policy 3.9.



ATTACHMENT A